REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following.

Currently, claims 77-113 remain pending in the present application, including independent claims 77, 96, and 111. Independent claim 77, for instance, is directed to a wound or stacked product comprising a plurality of paper sheet layers wound or stacked to form the product. Each paper sheet layer has an exterior surface that defines ridges and valleys oriented in a first direction. The paper sheet layers are positioned adjacent to each other when stacked or wound such that the ridges and valleys of each paper sheet layer are substantially parallel to the ridges and valleys of adjacent paper sheet layers when wound or stacked. Each paper sheet layer comprises a multi-ply paper sheet or a single-ply paper sheet.

According to claim 77, bridging regions are formed into each exterior surface of the paper sheet layers such that the bridging regions extend outward from the exterior surface of the paper sheet layers. The bridging regions have a length sufficient to extend across at least two of the ridges. The bridging regions have a length-to-depth ration of from about 5:1 to about 40:1. The bridging regions at least partially obstruct the ridges and valleys of the surface of each paper sheet layer from mating with the ridges and valleys of the surface of adjacent paper sheet layers to inhibit nesting between each paper sheet layer when stacked or wound into the product.

In the Office Action, claims 77-89 and 92-110 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of the admitted Prior Art Teaching (PAT) in combination with U.S. Pat. No. 6,348,131 to Kershaw, et al. Specifically, the Office Action cites Fig. 3 of the

present application as admitting that a paper product made of a plurality of paper sheet layers positioned adjacent to each other and having nested ridges and valleys are known. The Office Action admits that the PAT fails to disclose bridging regions formed into the exterior surface of the paper sheet layers to inhibit nesting or mating when the sheet layers are stacked or rolled. In order to overcome the deficiencies of the PAT, the Office Action attempts to combine the teachings of Kershaw, et al., stating that it would have been obvious to include the embossments of Kershaw, et al. into the PAT products.

Kershaw, et al. is generally directed to embossing a multi-ply paper product (i.e., sheet) to enhance bulk, softness, and appearance of the product (i.e., sheet). Col. 2, lines 62-64. Kershaw, et al. discloses that design elements, in the form of embossed shapes, such as longitudinal undulations, are uniformly repeated over the surface of the sheet or are provided in clusters. Col. 9, lines 18-22. These embossments are provided to each ply of a multi-ply paper sheet. Col. 9, line 64 – Col. 10, line 10. Thereafter, the embossed plies are joined together into a multi-ply product. Col. 10, lines 11-16.

According to Kershaw, et al., the multi-ply paper sheet formed by their disclosed processes can have enhanced sheet bulk by displacing in the cross-direction so that the "peaks" of the undulations of one ply are either bound with the peaks or the "valleys" of the undulations of the other ply. Col. 11, lines 9-13. If the peaks and valleys of one ply are opposed to the peaks and valleys of the other ply, a very thick, soft two ply web will be formed. Col. 11, lines 15-18. Thus, Kershaw, et al. teaches a multi-ply product having increased sheet bulk.

In rejecting independent claims 77 and 96, the Office Action apparently mixes two different properties of a rolled (or stacked) product: (1) the sheet bulk of the individual paper web layers that form the product and (2) the roll (or stack) bulk of the wound (or stacked) product itself. Kershaw, et al. discloses a particular manner of combining the plies of a multi-ply product in order to maximize the bulk of the resulting multi-ply paper sheet. Thus, Kershaw, et al. is directed to increasing the sheet bulk of a multi-ply product, as opposed to increasing the bulk of the rolled or stacked product by inhibiting nesting between the wound or stacked sheets forming the final product.

The Office Action states that independent claims 77 and 96 would read on the multi-ply products of Kershaw, et al. if the multi-ply product were rolled or stacked. Applicants respectfully disagree. Kershaw, et al. simply does not disclose or even suggest preventing nesting between adjacent paper sheet products (either multi-ply or single-ply) when they are wound or stacked into a product.

In contrast, the present Application explains that the roll bulk of the product can decrease from nesting between layers of the wound (or stacked) paper product, which causes the roll (or stack) to become more tightly packed. Pg. 1, lines 24-31. This decrease in the roll bulk can occur even though the sheet bulk of the paper sheet layers forming the product remain relatively unchanged.

For example, independent claim 77 is directed to a rolled or stacked product having inhibited nesting between the paper sheet layers that form the product. As a result, the rolled or stacked product can exhibit increased roll (or stack) bulk, without a substantial change in the sheet bulk of the paper sheet layers forming the product. Likewise, independent claim 96 is directed to a method of forming a wound or stacked

paper product that has inhibited nesting between the layers of the paper product when those layers are wound or stacked.

Independent claims 77, 96, and 111 clarify that each paper sheet layer comprises either a single-ply paper sheet or a multi-ply paper sheet. Thus, the paper sheet layers themselves are a paper sheet product that is wound or stacked into a product, which distinguishes the paper sheet layers from confusion with the plies of a multi-ply product, such as disclosed in Kershaw, et al. Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 77, 96, and 111 are patentable over Kershaw, et al., either alone or in any combination.

In any event, Kershaw, et al. does not indicate that their embossments extend outward from the exterior surface of their multi-ply web. According to claims 77, 96, and 111, the bridging regions extend outward from the exterior surface of the paper sheet layers, clarifying that the bridging regions help inhibit nesting between each paper sheet layer when stacked or wound into the product.

Additionally, Applicants point out that Kershaw, et al. is directed only to multi-ply products. In fact, the only disclosure of increasing the sheet bulk of Kershaw, et al. is through inhibiting nesting between the plies of a multi-ply product. As such, there exists no disclosure or suggestion of inhibiting nesting between single-ply paper sheets wound (or stacked) into a rolled (or stacked) product. Applicants respectfully submit that Kershaw, et al. cannot provide any motivation for inhibiting the nesting between a single-ply paper sheet wound (or stacked) into a product. Thus, Applicants emphasize that dependent claims 88, 109, and 112 are patentable for at least all of the above reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present Application is in complete condition for allowance, thus favorable reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Should Examiner Halpern have any further questions or concerns, he is invited and encouraged to contact the undersigned at his convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 26, 2006